



Maryland Independent College
and University Association

Written Support

Senate Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs Committee

Senate Bill 161 – Task Force to Study Access to Mental Health Care in Higher Education

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On behalf of Maryland’s independent colleges and universities and the 65,600 students we serve, thank you for the opportunity to provide this written testimony in support of ***Senate Bill 161 – Task Force to Study Access to Mental Health Care in Higher Education***. We applaud the Maryland General Assembly’s leadership in identifying student mental health as a priority issue and convening subject matter experts and key stakeholders to review policies, procedures, and best practices and models for providing high quality and accessible mental health care on college campuses. Particularly during the current global pandemic, these types of services are needed more than ever. This Task Force will make recommendations in areas including: the reduction of costs and barriers to providing access to mental health care to college students; the use of telemedicine, video conferencing, and hotlines; and the implementation of both general and specialized mental health counseling services.

MICUA member institutions offer a wide array of services to support and promote student mental health, emotional growth, and well-being. Counseling and wellness center structures and services vary across individual campuses but typically include: individual counseling, group counseling, on-call crisis services, outreach and consultation, programs and workshops, and referral to off-campus providers for specialized or longer term care. A wide range of resources are available to students who are facing either acute or ongoing mental health challenges and who are dealing with issues related to depression, anxiety, relationship problems, substance abuse, eating or body image concerns, academic challenges, social pressures, loss, and many other situations common for college students. Campuses also provide psychoeducational workshops, outreach, and programming on a variety of topics related to mental health and wellness, as well as training and consultation for faculty, staff, and student staff (such as resident assistants) for identifying and helping students who are in crisis.

MICUA appreciates the opportunity to directly contribute to and support the work of this Task Force through appointing two representatives from Maryland private nonprofit institutions of higher education. We look forward to the findings and recommendations that will come out of this group.

For all of these reasons, MICUA requests a favorable Committee report for Senate Bill 161.